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SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF S/E WILLIAMSON, AF/SPG
NSC FOR HUDSON AND PITTMAN
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU

SIPDIS
SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [UN](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: CLASHES CONTINUE ALONG NORTH-SOUTH BORDER, COURT CASE
ESCALATES TO VIOLENT CONFRONTATION

¶1. (SBU) Summary. Violent clashes continue to flare along Sudan's north-south boundary, centering on the Abyei region. On April 25, a skirmish between SPLA troops and a pro-NCP tribal force left a reported 20 casualties. On April 28, a murder in the town of Kharsana escalated into a battle that left an unknown number of dead and the town blockaded. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) Violent clashes along Sudan's north-south border continue, often escalating from apparently minor disputes into major battles. On April 25, SPLA troops battled a pro-NCP force near Payang, resulting in from 20-30 casualties, mostly among the Northern force, according to the SPLA. The Northern force was following, and the SPLA believed planned to attack, a convoy of IDPs traveling to the South to participate in the census. (Note: The Northern force has been described as "Misseriya," but this term seems often to be used generically in such incidents near Abyei. This particular group was traveling in military vehicles, at least some wore uniforms, and may have been SAF-supplied Misseriya PDF or other militia or even SAF troops. End note.)

¶3. (SBU) On April 28, a non-political court dispute in the town of Kharsana (NE of Abyei and North of Higlig in disputed territory) escalated dramatically following the murder of an ethnic Misseriya by an ethnic Nuer. Fighting between the two groups resulted in an unknown number of casualties and the town of Kharsana, including the SPLA garrison, being blockaded by Misseriya tribesman and access to water cut off. (Note: The SPLA garrison includes ethnic Nuba, Nuer, and Misseriya soldiers. It is not know how Misseriya SPLA troops reacted. End note.) SPLA sources allege that the SAF have been arming local Misseriya with heavier weapons and there also are unconfirmed rumors of direct SAF participation.

¶4. (SBU) Prompt response on the part of local authorities appears to have calmed the situation somewhat and contained it, at least for now. Southern Kordofan Governor Adam, Unity state Governor Taban, and GNU Minister of State for Humanitarian Affairs Ahmed Harun (who is also an ICC indicted suspect) traveled to Higlig to defuse the crisis. Governor Taban reportedly agreed to withdraw SPLA forces to the south for two weeks. The Misseriya agreed to end the blockade and allow access to drinking water. The two governors also agreed to negotiate compensation for the dead.

¶5. (U) Kharsana lies north of the disputed border between Abyei and South Kordofan and is claimed by both. On April 22, the first day of the national census, enumerators from South Kordofan were denied entrance to Kharsana by residents who apparently feared they would be counted as part of the "Northern" population and said that they should be counted by enumerators from Abyei. (Note: The enumeration boundaries laid out in census marking do not necessarily correspond to political boundaries, which has been a source of

confusion and dispute in a number of areas. End note.)

16. (SBU) Comment. The April 28 incident reflects how a seemingly minor dispute can escalate dangerously in the current atmosphere of political tension over the north-south border. Both the NCP and SPLM have been manipulating the situation for their own advantage and at the expense of the local populations. If this pattern continues, some future incident could easily spiral beyond the ability of either side to contain. End comment.

FERNANDEZ